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THE DEFENCE Of the PEOPLE called QUAKERS:

BEING A

Friends Society of Ashby (Pickard)

REPLY,

To a Book lately Publiſhed by certain *Prieſts* of the County of *Norfolk*, under the pretended Title of *The Quakers Challenge.*

And Containing,

Some Brief and Modeſt *Animadverſions* upon the Book it ſelf.

Several *Certificates*, which Detect the Errors in thoſe of *Weſt-Dereham*, and Clear the People called *Quakers* of the ſaid *Challenge.*

The Letters that paſſed between Them and the *Prieſts.*

Mark 14. 10, 11.

And Judas Iſcariot, *one of the Twelve, went unto the Chief Prieſts to betray him unto them.*
When they heard it, they were glad, and promiſed to give him Money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.

London, Printed and Sold by *T. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court* in *Gracious-ſtreet*, and at the *Bible* in *Leaden-Hall-ſtreet*, 1699.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE PREFACE.

Friendly Reader,

THIS *is not the design of these Introductory Lines, to endeavour the Pre-possessing of thy Mind with more favourable Sentiments concerning* Us, *and our Cause, than what Truth and Justice may and do require: But to lay before thee plain Matter of Fact, by way of Preface, to our following Defence; to the End thou may'st see what steps our Adversaries have taken to draw us into this Controversie, what Provocations they have given us thus to appear, and the necessity of making this our Reply and Vindication Publick.*

For tho' we are Represented by the Priests, *as the Stirrers up of Strife and Contention, and the Beginners of this Controversie; yet, by the following Account, we hope the contrary will appear, and that they themselves were the Authors thereof, assisted by* F. Bugg; *they having Challenged us in General Terms, and Charged us with* Blasphemy *against* God, *against* Christ, *and against the* Holy Scriptures, *&c. which we are not guilty of; and appoined us Time and Place,* viz. *on the 8th of* December, 1698. *in* West-Dereham Church (*so called*) *Then and There to hear the said Charge proved against us; and several Letters passed between Them and Us relating thereunto; wherein we Demanded a* Copy of their Charge; *namely,* the Authors Names, Titles of the Books, and Pages, *which we thought Just and Reasonable for them to give us, because they pretended to Charge us out of our* Friends Books, *that if the Authors were Living they might Explain for themselves; or if Dead, we might have time to make due Preparation for our selves.*

And their Unfairness was such, that we could not prevail with them, but that they were resolved to proceed, whether we would meet them or no, upon their own Terms; that is, without giving us the Particulars of their Charge: We judged it needful to make our Appearance at the Time and Place by them appointed, not to Comply with their Challenge, upon the Measures *which they had fixed; but to*

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insist upon our former Demand, in the face of all the People then and there Assembled; and in Case of Refusal, to except against their Proceedings, as Unjust and Unreasonable; which we accordingly did. For notwithstanding our Endeavours both by Sober Reasoning, and Earnest Intreaties, they still positively denied us.

This we thought was very hard Dealing, from those who would be accounted Ministers of Christ; *but our Wills being Resigned to the Will of God, whose we are, and whom we serve; we concluded to be at Quiet, and Patiently to bear our Burden; not in the least intending to Print a* Narrative *of what passed between Them and Us: And the more especially, because, at the End of the Meeting, some of the* Priests *were heard to say,* Now we have done with the Quakers. *And one of the* Quakers *desired to know when they would meet again; the* Priests *answered,* Let it end here.

But these appeared to be Words of Course, and not of Reality, as the Sequel soon demonstrated: For quickly after came forth, in the Printed News, *a very Partial and Erroneous Account of the* West-Dereham *Conference, which we were willing to Hope, was not done by the Direction or Consent of any of the* Priests *that were concerned therein: But our Hopes were soon frustrated; for in another* News Paper, *soon after that, it was affirmed to be done by their Approbation; and then came forth their* Printed Relation, *falsly called,* The Quakers Challenge, *with several of their own Names to it, and some other Persons. In which, as we conceive, are many Falshoods, undue Reflections and Insinuations contained.*

And for Proof hereof, we intreat the Perusal of this ensuing Reply, For the Manifesting of Truth, and Clearing Us, and for the Undeceiving those that have been, or may be, misled by that untrue Relation, which is Attested by some Persons of Note, whom we believe were the more easily perswaded to Subscribe it, because they had not a Right Understanding, who were the Aggressors *and* Fomenters *of the* Controversie, *and the* Priests *further* Design *against us, who are their Peaceable Neighbours, and*

True Friends,

Richard Ashby, John Fiddeman,
Thomas Bonnet, Daniel Phillips,
John Hubbard, Tho. Buckingham.

Some

Some Brief and Modeſt

ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON THE

Norfolk Prieſts Relation of the *Weſt-Derebam Conference.*

Relation, p. 1. 'Some *Quakers* in the County of *Nor-*
'*folk* having, by a Letter, Challenged the *Clergy* of
'the *Church* of *England*, Time and Place (leave
'from our Superiours firſt obtained) were at length
'fixed.

Animadverſion, This is precariouſly Aſſerted by the *Prieſts*, and therefore lies upon them yet to prove; for it is not their Prefixing an undue Title to our *firſt Letter*, and then calling it by the Name of the *Quakers Challenge*, that will make it ſo. If they had owned themſelves the *firſt Challengers* of the *Quakers*, they had done themſelves Juſtice, and the World too; whom they have Impos'd upon, by that Fictitious Frontis-piece. For we did in our *Letters* to them, and do hereby deny both to them, and all that ſhall read our *Defence*, that we were the *Aggreſſors* and firſt Challengers. And for the clearing our Innocency in this Matter, we have herewith cauſed *Certificates* to be Printed; which we conceive, will fully Evince, and Manifeſt that the *Aggreſſion* lay at their own Doors, and their Mercenary Agent and Accomplice *F. Bugg*'s.

And had thoſe, whom they ſtile their Superiours, had a right Information hereof, and alſo of their *Taunting* at us, and Daringly Saying, That if we came not at their *Summons*, it ſhould be *a Token of our Inſincerity and Cowardiſe for ever*; we are Charitably Perſwaded, they would not ſo far have Countenanced theſe *Prieſts*, as they ſuggeſt they have.

And whereas they ſay, *Time and Place were at length fixed*; they ought alſo to have told, who fixed them; for that was their own Act. But this they have concealed here, to blind the Reader, and hide their own Forwardneſs. However *their Letter*, dated the 27th of *October*, 1698. is an undeniable Witneſs againſt them, as to the fixing of *Time* and *Place*; and though we told them *in our Letter* on the 23d of the 9th Month following, 'Seeing you reſolutely Refuſe our Juſt Demand (viz. *of a Copy of their Charge*) 'we do not look upon our 'ſelves obliged to meet you under the Limitation of *your* '*Terms*: Yet they proceeded according to what they wrote *in their Letter*, dated the 16th of *November*, in theſe words, 'Pray trouble us no more with your Let-'ters, for our Meaſures are fix'd, and you may chuſe 'whether you will meet us upon the Terms reſolved upon 'or no.

Rel. p. 1. 'And our Charge, according to their deſire, 'ſent to them, as appears by our firſt Letter.

Animad. They ſent us a Charge indeed, but not according to our Deſire; for we Deſired a Particular of *the Blaſphemies* they Charged us with, together with the *Authors Names, Titles of the Books, and Pages*, as may be ſeen by the Three laſt of our *Letters*: But this they conſtantly Denied us. In our *firſt Letter*, we were not ſo expreſs as we were afterwards, when we ſaw in what *General Terms* they Charged us; but we Thought, it had been enough

to

to let them know our Freedom to take their Charge, and ſtand a Publick Trial, *deſiring only the Common Priviledges to ſuch Occaſions belonging.* Now what are theſe Common Priviledges, but a Particular of *their Charge*, with *Author, Title, Book and Page*; conſidering, they told us in their *Letter* dated the 3*d.* of *November*, 1698. *We intend to Charge you with Blaſphemy out of your own Books.*

Rel. p. 1. 'And on the day appointed, *viz. December* 'the 8*th.* 1698. the *Quakers* and *We* met in *Weſt-Dereham-* 'Church, in the County aforeſaid, and took our Places 'before prepared. We firſt read the Service of the Day, 'near the Beginning of which, they coming in ſtaid it out, 'not to joyn in the Duty, but rather to affront it, carrying 'themſelves Irreverently all the Time.

Animad. 'Tis true, We met them on the 8*th.* of the 10*th.* Month, 1698. in *Weſt-Dereham Steeple-Houſe*; but We neither appointed the *Day*, nor the *Place*, nor agreed to their *Terms*; for we looked upon their *Terms* as Unreaſonable. And therefore our Appearing there, was, not to joyn Iſſue with them, and to Anſwer their pretended Charge; but to demand at this *Meeting*, what we had ſo often in our Letters Inſiſted upon before, and they had Refuſed us, namely, *a Copy of their Charge*; and to acquaint the People, whom the *Prieſts* had Miſinformed, that we were not the *firſt Challengers.*

Our coming in while they were at their Service, was by the Direction of their *Warden* and a *Watch-man*, ſent, as we Suppoſe, for that Purpoſe. And when we were come in, tho' we did not joyn with them; yet we offered no Affront, nor carried our ſelves Irreverently, unleſs a *Silent and Serious Deportment* all the Time of their Service, may bring us under that Imputation.

Rel. p. 1. ‘ As ſoon as *our Service* was ended, one of ‘ *their Speakers* began to Pray; whereupon all of them ‘ immediatly pulled off their Hats, and carried themſelves ‘ as at a Religious Worſhip.

Animad. We hope that was no Offence, and if they could ſay in Truth, they were for that Time, *Sober and Quiet*, as we were during *their Service*, as they rightly call it; we think it would have been more to their Reputation, than to Cry out, *A Conventicle, a Conventicle* (a Thing ſtrange to hear of in a *Steeple-Houſe*) while our *Friend* was on his knees Praying to Almighty God; as if there was a Law againſt Praying to Him, which we know nothing of, and beſides it's Allowed by their *Liturgy*.

Rel. p. 1. ‘ We inſiſted that they were *our Challengers*, ‘ and repeated to them their own *Letter of Challenge*; ‘ They told us, they were provoked by certain Carriages ‘ of ours to write that Letter.

Animad. True it is, we did, and do deny, that we were the *Aggreſſors and firſt Challengers*, and we Proffered ſeveral *Teſtimonies* to Clear up that Matter; but being then Obſtructed by our *Adverſaries*, We have now Printed them, and leave the Judgment and Deciſion thereof to the Impartial.

Rel. p. 1, 2. ‘ And after many long Harangues of ſeve- ‘ ral of *their Speakers*, they deſired that all *the Letters* ‘ which paſſed between us might be read to the Auditory; ‘ not as if they could get any Advantage by reading them, ‘ but as appeared to us afterwards, meerly to divert us an ‘ Hour or more from proſecuting *our Charge*.

Animad. It was very reaſonable *the Letters* ſhould be read, that the People might underſtand; *Firſt*, that they were the *firſt Challengers and Chargers*; which they now grant by Complaining, they were Diverted from proſecuting *their Charge*. *Secondly*, That we had ſeveral Times

Requeſted

Requested the *Authors Names, the Titles and Pages of the Books*; out of which they did intend to Charge us, that we might have been duly Prepared to Meet them, and Give proper Answers to *their several Charges:* For there is a common Justice due to every Man, that he should have the Liberty to Explain his own Words; and if the Author was Dead, or could not be there, that his Meaning by other Words or Sentences relating to the same Subject might be Explained; and if they could not, then it was Time enough to Disown those Words and Sentences, but not without due Examination; for otherwise we should be Unjust to our Friends, and Injurious to our Selves.

Rel. p. 2. 'We answered, we had Law and Equity a-'gainst such an Unreasonable Demand: We told them the 'Law was their own, 'twas from *Edward Burroughs*, who 'was a Son of Thunder, and spoke all from the Mouth of 'the Lord, whose Book used to be with them, of as much 'Authority, as the *Bible*.

Animad. Our Demand was, a more Particular Account than a General Charge. But was this Unreasonable? Or is there either Law or Equity that forbids it? We know of none that doth; but do Conceive, we have both on our Side. Their Allegation out of *Edward Burroughs* doth not reach the *Case*, nor could his Authority Settle the Preliminaries of the *Conference*: For he hath been dead about 35 Years, and this was Published about 5 Years before that; therefore what is a Challenge of near 40 Years Standing, and by a *Friend*, so long since dead, to us? Is it Reasonable that that should Affect us, and Set us such Measures, as these *Partial Judges* Pitch'd and Resolv'd upon? Besides *E. B.* tho' he made an ample Offer to *the Priests* of that Day, saying, *Let them appoint Time, Place, and proffer Terms at their own Pleasure:* Yet he did not thereby Oblige us by any Express Word or Consequence.

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That he was *Boanerges*, or, a Son of Thunder, and did Speak from the Mouth of the Lord, we humbly Acknowledge; and Bless God for Raising up and Sending forth so Eminent and Able an Instrument, to Preach the *Everlasting Gospel*. His Memory is Precious among Us, and his Books of Esteem; but not of Equal Authority with *the Bible*. For though, he had received a Measure of the same Spirit, which was in the *Holy Pen-men*; yet *Dispensations* Vary according to the manifold Wisdom of God; and therefore we prefer the *Bible* before *E. B*'s Books, and all other Writings Extant whatsoever.

We do not Plead for any *New Gospel, Faith, or Doctrine*, different from that which Christ, and his Holy Prophets and Apostles taught, and is Recorded in the *Scriptures of Truth*; but for the Revelation of that, which they Taught, and is therein Recorded. Wherefore as the Apostle says; *There are diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of Administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of Operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all: But the Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7. So say we, *viz.* That there is a Measure of the same Spirit in us, which was in the Holy Prophets and Apostles; so that 'tis not an *Equality* of any Writings with theirs, but a *Measure* of the same Spirit of Revelation which they had, that we Contend for.

Rel. p. 3. 'For the nature of the *Blasphemy* we Charge 'them with, should be so Plain and Obvious, that every 'Christian shall be able to Understand it, to be so upon the 'Reading it to them.

Animad. If the Nature of the *Blasphemy* be so Plain and Obvious, as these Men pretend; why did they Refuse at the *Conference*, to give us a Particular Account of it? For their Charging us with *Blasphemy* of so Plain a Nature, and

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yet Denying us *a Copy*, after *so many Demands*, gives us just Cause to Suspect they are Conscious of the Invalidity of their *Proofs*, and therefore of the *Charge* it self; but that *Envy* link'd with *Interest*, Prompts them to *Calumniate Loudly*; that Some might be Frighted from Coming near us, and Others Irritated to *Hate, Malign and Persecute us.*

Rel. p. 3. 'But should we tell them the Names of *our* 'Books, *Page and Line* before-hand, we had deserv'd ra-'ther to be *laghed at as Fools*, than *looked on as Disputants*; 'for this would be to send them our Arguments before the 'Disputation.

Animad. Here they make a Poor Excuse for Denying our Just Demands, and then give as Weak a Reason for it. But has the Hiding the Names of their *Books, Page and Line* from us, Secured their Reputation among *Men of Wisdom?* Or only got them the *blind Applauses of the Ignorant?* We know that Justice and True Wisdom are Inseparable; and therefore, seeing they have Positively Refused us *Justice*, their Ambition of being accounted *Disputants*, when they themselves know, *'twas no Disputation*; as it cannot Cover them from the Imputation of *Folly*, so can it not Acquit them of the Guilt of *Injustice.*

Did ever Men Apologize to less Advantage than these have done? We never desired their *Arguments*, but their *Quotations*, that we might know where to find the *Blasphemies* (if any Such there were in *our Friends Books*) and make Preparation for *our Answer:* And ye there they talk of *their Arguments*, as though we Solicited for them before hand: For we told them, they might Reserve *their Arguments* till they Needed them, and yet might Reasonably Give us the *Quotations*, they Pretended to Argue upon.

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That they had a great Mind to be looked on as *Disputants*, and were willing to seem furnished with Arguments, to prove *their Charge*, we do not Deny; if *Clamourous Harangues*, and *Tricking Attempts*, be any Evidence of it: For they would Fain have Drawn us into this Snare, *namely*, To have Condemned our Friends of Blasphemy, before we had Examined what *that* was, which they *Called* so. Which Vain Effort, whether it Proclaims their *Folly*, or Speaks their *Honesty and Fairness* in Arguing, the Impartial Reader, though but of a Common Capacity, may easily Determine.

Priest *Archer* of *Milden-Hall* confessed indeed, that the *Quakers of this Generation were Orthodox*; and the Confession of an *Adversary* is very considerable: But he would have had us Condemn our Friends *Books*, before we either Heard, or Saw, or Knew, that there was any *Blasphemy* in them. But we conceive, it would have been as unjust in us, to have Condemned the Evidence before we Heard them; as it was, and is, in our *Enemies* to Conceal them from us.

Rel. p. 4. 'We told them, the Evidence we should bring 'was not from *Ours*, but from their *Own Books*; and it 'was not fit we should tell them the Names of our Wit-'nesses before hand, that they might have time to tamper 'with them, and make them speak what they never in-'tended.

Animad. It Looks, as if these Men were somewhat *Confused*; for in p. 3. they say, *Our Books, Page and Line*; here forgetting what they Said but six Lines before, they say, *Not from Ours*, but from their *Own Books*.

Again, how Loosely and Idly do they Discourse in the latter Part of this Paragraph, about *our Tampering with their Witnesses?* Was it possible for us *to Tamper*, as they

Phrase

Phraſe it, with them, *viz.* Printed Books, which were in their own Hands, and in the Hands of many Others? Or could we make them Speak otherwiſe than they do? Surely, the Weakneſs of this Argument, as well as the Diſparity between *Books* and *Men*, ſhews little Wiſdom in theſe *Learned Rectors*, and rather beſpeaks their Shortneſs, than their Sharpneſs.

Rel. p. 4. 'When a Time of Diſputation with an Ad-'verſary is ſet, and I have ſent him the *Queſtions* to be 'Diſputed on; was it ever expected that I ſhould before 'the Time ſend him all my Proofs? The *Queſtion* you 'know betwixt us is, whether they are Blaſphemers or no?

Animad. Here is another *Blunder*, hardly tolerable in any, but in ſuch Diſputants. Sometimes 'tis *I*, ſometimes 'tis *We* or *Us*, *Singular* and *Plural*, *One* and *More*, as their Fancy leads them. But leaving this Confuſed Variation of Numbers, let us Attend to what they ſay next; 'The Queſtion (ſay they) you know betwixt us is, whe-'ther they are *Blaſphemers* or no? This is another *Effluvium* from a cloudy Intellect. They never, till now, put it in the Form of a Queſtion, whether we were *Blaſphemers* or no? But Charg'd us with Expreſs and Down-right *Blaſphemy*. Therefore they are gone from their former *Mode* of Expreſſion, and have brought it now to Terms of a Diſputable Nature.

Rel. p. 4. 'Preſently they cry'd out, We Reproach the 'Parliament, who have owned them to be Diſſenting Pro-'teſtants, whilſt we would prove them to be *Blaſphemers*; 'and indeed they did ſtrut exceedingly for the Honour 'the Parliament hath done them, to Recognize them as 'Proteſtants, as if under the Protection of the Act of Par-'liament, they might Blaſpheme *(cum Privilegio)* and no 'Body muſt be ſo bold as to ask them, Why do 'you ſo?

Animad. We Received not our Religion of Man, nor were we Taught it after a Traditional Manner, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ, whom the *Lord God hath laid in* Zion *for a sure Foundation*, Isa. 28. 16. Even *the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, Eph. 2. 20. and of all the Righteous in every Generation. And He that is our Foundation, the same is our Defence and Protection: For he is our King, the Lord God Omnipotent, and the Head of the true *Church, which is in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Thess. 1. 1. and against which *the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail*, Mat. 16. 18. As we Received not our Religion from Man, so Man cannot Continue it to us, nor Take it from us. Yet we did and do Gratefully Acknowledge the *Favour of the Government*, and do Desire to Bless Almighty God for it, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*, Prov. 8. 15. And so far were we from Abusing this Favour, that we Commended the Reason they Assigned for it, namely, **The Uniting of the King's Protestant Subjects in Interest and Affection**, and Earnestly Pressed the Prosecution of it: For we Heartily Desire the Well-fare of our Country, and Actually Endeavour it, according to what we have Received, wheresoever our Lot is Providentially Cast.

But it never was in our Hearts to conceive, that we had thereby **a Privilege to Blaspheme God, or Contemn Authority**, though these *Priests* have Misrepresented us, both to our *Neighbours*, and the *Nation*, to be Persons that *Blaspheme* under the Protection of an Act of Parliament. O Unchristian Practice! Are these the Teachers of the People? Are these Ministers of Christ? If the Tree is to be known by its Fruit, their Works do apparently Discover that they are not.

As to the Demeaning our Selves under the *Government*, We Hope, *We have had our Conversation Honest in the sight*

Sight of all Men, and have led quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty: Not only Doing unto others, what we would have them Do unto us; but we have Patiently Born many *Injuries*, and Undergone great *Sufferings* for Truth and Righteouſneſs ſake. And in this Temper and Evenneſs of Spirit, have we been Preſerved by the Power of our God, under *All*, and through *All our Exerciſes*, to this *very Day:* And we have not only a Teſtimony in our Selves, but many *Witneſſes* without us, how contrary to that *Strutting Carriage*, our *Adverſaries* falſly Speak of, we Behaved our ſelves at this *Conference*.

Rel. p. 4. 'They told us, we are going about moſt uncharitably to Damn them all.

Animad. And ſo they were; but that neither was nor is in their Power to do; *Thanks be to God through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* They have indeed Invaded the *Regal Power of Chriſt*, and Taken upon them to *Bind and Looſe*, as though they were the Succeſſors of *Peter*; but wherein do they truly Succeed him? Is it not rather in Denying of his Maſter, than in Owning of him? For they neither Follow him in *Faith*, *Doctrine*, *Humility*, *Patience*, nor in any other *Characters* of that Penitent and Self-denying Apoſtle and Miniſter of Chriſt.

Rel. p. 4. We told them, they may Repent of their 'Blaſphemies, and be ſaved: For *Paul* was once one of 'their Companions in Blaſpheming the Name of Jeſus 'Chriſt.

Animad. We replied, That ever ſince we have been a People Gathered by the Power and Spirit of God, we have ſincerely Believed, and do ſtill Believe, *in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as the holy Scriptures do Declare of him; and do not only plainly Say, but alſo firmly Believe, That *there is no other Name given under Heaven whereby Man can be ſaved*; neither is there *Salvation in any other Name:* And this we hope is no *Blaſphemy*.

Whereas they say, Paul *was once One of our Companions in Blaspheming the Name of Jesus Christ.* We Absolutely Deny, that ever we *Blasphemed* that Sacred Name, *whereby we are called*; and which we Put our whole Trust and Confidence in, and Prefer *above every other Name.* And if they mean by *Paul*, the Apostle *Paul*; they have shewn great Ignorance, in not Distinguishing between *Saul* the Pharisee, and *Paul* the Apostle. While he went under the *First Denomination*, he was a *Blasphemer*, and not under the *Second.* For waving the Conjectures of others, about his having two Names at his Circumcision, *Saul* a Jewish, and *Paul* a Roman Name: We never Read in all the Holy Scriptures, that he was called *Paul* till after his Conversion, see *Acts* 13. 9. where 'tis said, *He was filled with the Holy Ghost*; and then surely no *Blasphemer.*

So that their *Simile*, though Designed to our Reproach, Tends greatly to our Honour. *Paul* the Apostle is our Companion in the Faith and Patience of *Jesus Christ*; but not *Saul* the Persecutor and Blasphemer.

Rel. p. 5. 'They told us, Blasphemy against God, was 'the Sin against the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost 'was God: We told them, we were Sorry it was so for 'their sakes; but for their Comfort, we hope for to make 'it Appear, it was not that Unpardonable Sin: So from 'the 12*th* of St. *Matthew* we explained to them the Na'ture of that Sin, and so Stop'd their Mouths.

Animad. They hoped to make it Appear, That *Blasphemy against God was not that Unpardonable Sin*, mentioned in the 12th of *Matthew*, but have not done it; neither have they Defined that unpardonable Sin, or Proved, that Blasphemy against God is not *Blasphemy* against the *Holy Ghost.*

If they had explained to us the Nature of that Sin, they should first have given the *Etymology*, and Proper Signi-

Signification of the word *Blaſphemy*; for how ſhould the People Underſtand, what *Blaſphemy* againſt the *Holy Ghoſt* is, before they are Informed what *Blaſphemy* it ſelf Signifieth? So that not Acquainting the People with the proper Senſe of the Word, they were *Barbarians* to the Major Part of the Auditory, and fill'd their Ears only with Frightful and Unintelligible Sounds. 'Twill therefore be Convenient, ſince theſe *Learned Rectors* have not done it, to Explain the word *Blaſphemy*, and make it Obvious to the Capacity and Underſtanding of the People.

The Word then is of *Greek* Original, Βλασφημια, *Blaſphemy*; often rendered ſo by our Tranſlators. *Lexicographers* generally Derive it from Βλαπτειν τὴν Φήμην, that is, to *Calumniate*, *Speak Evil*, or *Reproach the good Name of another*. And this according to *Beza*, in his *Notes* upon *Mat.* 9. 3. is the common Acceptation of it among the more Elegant *Greek Writers*. *Blaſphemy* then in True and Proper Engliſh is *Evil Speaking*; and ſo 'tis Tranſlated, *Eph.* 4. 31. *Let all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour,* (Καὶ Βλασφημια) *and Evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you, with all Malice.*

And having given the genuine Senſe of the Word, we will in the next Place, for the Benefit both of *Prieſts* and *People*, Acquaint them with what their own Church ſays of *Evil-ſpeaking* againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*: They may find it in *Anthony Sparrow*'s *Collection of Articles*, &c. p. 44. and it is this, '*Blaſphemy* againſt the Holy Ghoſt is, when a 'Man of Malice, and Stubbornneſs of Mind, doth rail 'upon the Truth of God's Word manifeſtly perceived 'and being Enemy thereto, Perſecuteth the ſame. 'Tis the 17*th* of the *Articles* agreed upon by the Biſhops and others in the *Convocation* at *London*, in the Year 1552. and Publiſhed by the Authority of King *Edward* VI. in the Year 1553. We do not ſay, That we Agree to this Definition,

tion; but it being the Account their *Convocation* gives of it we conceive the *Priests* should either Own it; or Reject that *Article* made in the Year 1562. by another *Convocation*, which declares, *The Church hath Authority in Controversies of Faith.* If they will own it, then whether the Sin against God be the Sin against the Holy Ghost or no? We do not see how they can Quit themselves of the *Blasphemy* the *Article* speaks of. For do they not of Malice Rail upon the Truth of God's Word manifestly perceived, and as Enemies thereunto Persecute the same, in Charging so many *Blasphemies* upon the *Light within*, as taught by the *Quakers?* For the *Light within* is *Christ*, and *Christ* is the *Truth of God's Word, The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, John 14. 6. *The Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God*, Chap. 1. 1. The Sum and Substance of the Gospel, and that which the Holy Scriptures give Testimony of, and we Believe and Teach.

But whether the *Blasphemy* against the *Holy Ghost* be Unpardonable, we shall not Determine: A great Doctor of their own Communion was of the Opinion, it was not; see *Hammond*'s *Annot.* upon *Mat.* 12.

If they Print again, we intreat them to be Plain and Open, and not Talk great Words in the Dark, to Endeavour to Fright People, and to Exasperate them against us without any just Cause or Provocation.

Rel. p. 5. 'And now we began to Charge them with 'Blasphemy against God.

Animad. Whom did they begin to Charge? Not the *Quakers* of this present Generation, for they were then acknowledged *Orthodox*; and yet at first, all were by them Charged to be *Blasphemers*; see their Contradiction.

Rel. p. 5. 'And as soon as we began to prosecute our 'Charge, one gets upon a Form, and Bawls aloud to the 'People, *&c.*

Animad.

Animad. It's true, one got up on a Form, and made a Solemn Confeſſion of Faith in Scripture-Terms; yet did not Bawl, but in words of Sobriety Declared to this Effect,

We Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and in Jeſus Chriſt his only Begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour, who was Born of the Virgin Mary *(whom the Holy Ghoſt overſhadowed) who appeared in the World in that Body prepared for him; who died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification. And we Believe in the Holy Spirit, and own the Three that bear Record in Heaven, and that theſe Three are One. We Own the Holy Scriptures of Truth, and Believe they were given forth by Divine Inſpiration, and that they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, and are able to make the Man of God wiſe to Salvation, through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus. And We Eſteem the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Teſtament, to be the beſt Book in all the World, and could be glad that People did ſpend more of their time in Reading of them. And the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, his* Baptiſm *and* Supper, *according to the Holy Scriptures; and that we neither Preach, Teach, nor Believe in any other Light than the* Life *of that* Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God: *And therefore this Light, as taught by us, could not expoſe us to Error or Blaſphemy.*

And we own Magiſtracy to be the Ordinance of God, for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and Praiſe of them that do well.

Rel. p. 5. 'This Diſorder hindred us from Proſecuting 'our deſign to any Purpoſe; tho' we permitted every one 'of them from *London*, or from *Rome*, if they pleaſed, to 'have free Liberty to Diſpute, if they will do it fairly, 'without Noiſe or Clamour.

Animad. Whatever their Deſign was, it ſeems they did not Proſecute it to any Purpoſe: But what an unjuſt and unkind

unkind Insinuation is this, *from* London *or* Rome? As tho' we had *Romish Emissaries* among us; who, Blessed be our God, do equally Renounce all the *Corrupt Doctrines, Anti-Christian Spirit, Lord-like Power and Grandeur, Idolatrous Worship, Superstitious Ceremonies, and Wicked Practices*, both of *Pope*, and all *Others*, who Persecute for Religion and Conscience towards God, it being Romish. And this we Testifie and Declare, that Whoever they are that promote Persecution, upon any Pretence whatsoever, they are Friends to *Rome*, and not to *England*, being *Profest Enemies to Christian Liberty and Property, and Publick Disturbers of the Peace of their Native Country.*

Rel. p. 5. 'And whereas we brought a great Number 'of the *Quakers* Books, both Old and New, and all of 'them of their most Celebrated Authors, they cried no 'Books, no Arguments; which occasioned great Laughter 'and Shouting among the People.

Animad. Who said so? We would willingly have discoursed upon *Books Regularly*, but when we demanded a Copy of *their Charge*, which was but Justice; then the *Managers of the Conference*, who should have been *Examples* to the People, of *Gravity and Soberness*, did turn it off to *Laughter and Shouting*, with a *Company of vain Persons* there present, to Joyn them therein.

Rel. p. 6. 'And ever and anon they would have been 'Charging us Insolently, urging us to prove our selves 'Christians.

Animad. They gave us great Occasion to Question their *Christianity*, by reason of their *frequent Hissing and Hollowing*, which made us take Notice of it to the Auditory, that they might Observe *what Fruits* some of them brought forth.

Rel. p. 6. 'And by and By we must prove our selves 'Ministers of Christ, which was answered.

Animad.

Animad. We do not remember that any of them did: but if they did, Why did not they Insert it here, that we might have seen it? They gave the Occasion by their frequent Examining our Friends; whereupon One of them said, *If they would prove themselves Ministers of Christ, he would be Chatechized by them*; but they Declined the Proof of that; and when one in the Pulpit made an Essay towards it, they discountenanced him, saying, He was a *Young Man, and not concerned with them in this Affair*, or to that Effect; yet we Acknowledge, he Behaved himself more gravely then most of them.

Rel. p. 6. 'And it was a Cunning Design of theirs, to 'divert us from our Charge, so much dreaded by them.

Animad. It rather seems they were upon Cunning Designs, and afraid to give their Charge; than that we were affraid to take it: For we offered to pay for the Writing, if we might have had it; and once we had a promise from Dr. *Beckham*, but were afterward denied by Rector *Meriton*.

Now, being thus imposed upon, and denied just *Measures*, we told the Auditory; that seeing these Persons had refused us Justice; we *Appealed to the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Judge of All*, and in *His Name and Fear*, we made our Confession of Faith in Opposition to their Charges; and then some of them *Laughed, Hissed* and *Hollowed*, and one of them called for the *Stocks*, and a *Watch-man* came near the Scaffold, which we were upon, and held up his *Bill* at us: And they appearing with such seeming Threatning and Violence, and we could not be heard; some of our Friends took Occasion to disperse certain *Books*, called, *The Christianity of the People called* Quakers *Asserted*, &c. among the People, that they might speak for us. And whereas it was Suggested, that the *Book* being without a Name, it was to serve a Turn, and might be denyed afterwards.

Now We do Declare, That *Book* was first Printed in the Year 1689. in Behalf of the said People, and given to the *Parliament*, and since Reprinted; to serve no other Turn but *Truth*, and to shew in brief, what we Own and Hold concerning the things mentioned therein; and that they are not Contrary, but in all respects Agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*.

And as to their Resolution, of not leaving the Matter thus, and Intention of Proving *their Charge*, at a more Favourable Opportunity, *viz. When the Days are long, and the Weather good*; as also, their **Permitting** any of Us to Appear, and Signifying how Civilly they will Treat Us, *viz. By Taking us by the Hands, and leading us out of Doors*, We think not to take much notice of it; but Commit our Cause to the Lord; who knows our Innocency, to whose Will we are Resigned, and in whom we Trust, that he will Defend us from their Evil Designs, Threatned and Attempted against us.

Rel. p. 6, 7. 'It being near the Evening, one of their 'Speakers made mention of our Lord Bishop's Name, and 'that he had waited on him at *Norwich*, and discoursed 'with him about this Matter in the presence of the Arch-'Deacon (Dr. *Jeffery*'s) And insinuated to the People, as 'if my Lord had now a more favourable Opinion of their 'Challenge than before, since he had given him a more 'Just Relation (as he said) of the Circumstances, but 'none of us could believe his Relation.

Animad. We hope 'twas no Offence to wait on the Bishop of *Norwich*, but we deny what they say was Insinuated; for we neither did, nor do Esteem our selves the *Aggressors, or first Challengers*.

And though they *could not Believe the Relation* he gave, 'was nevertheless *True*.

Rel. p. 5.

Rel. p. 8. 'We hope we have ſtopt the Gangrene that 'it ſpreads no further in our Corner, the People being 'generally ſatisfied, and do believe them now to be Blaſ-'phemers, becauſe they refuſed to come to a Trial.

Animad. If they have ſtopt the *Gangrene*, as they falſly call it, what need they then ſeek the Remedy of the *Parliament*, by *Petitioning* them? Doth not this ſhew what Spirit they are of? But our Defence againſt them, is, *The Shield of Faith*, which is able to quench all the Fiery Darts of the Devil: *By it the Elders obtained a good Report, ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained Promiſes, ſtopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire, eſcaped the Edge of the Sword, out of Weakneſs were made Strong, waxed Valiant in Fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens*, Heb. 11. 2, 33, 34.

Are theſe *Miniſters* of *Chriſt?* Are theſe *Ambaſſadors* of the *Prince of Peace*, who endeavour the Subverſion of their Neighbours Peace, both Civil and Religious?

But what a weak, as well as falſe, Affirmation is it to ſay, *The People are generally ſatisfied, and do believe us now to be Blaſphemers, becauſe* (as they ſpeak) *we refuſed to come to a Trial?* For we were willing to come to a Trial, as appears by *our Letters*, and their *own Relation* of the *Conference*, upon ſuch reaſonable Terms, as the *Juſtice of England* allows by the Common Law, even to Malefactors, viz. *A Copy of their Charge*; but this they Peremptorily Denied us. Now is it probable, that the People ſhould be ſo *Generally Satisfied*, and Believe that we were *Blaſphemers*, when the Cauſe aſſigned for this Pretended Satisfaction and Belief is Evidently and Notoriouſly Falſe? This Triumphing of *theſe Prieſts*, before they have got the Victory, both loudly Proclaims their own Weakneſs, and manifeſtly Impoſeth upon the Credulity of the People.

Note, Moreover that these *Priests*, who *first Challenged* and *Charged* Us (the former of which they now deny) did at the *Conference* use Various Ways to divert us, from Proving them what they really were and are, *viz.* The *first Challengers*; and did Insultingly Demand our Names, and whence we were, as if they had been the *King's Justices* of the Peace; and would Impose upon, and Question us, as if they had a Jurisdiction over us; and would, as if we were Children, have Catechised us; which gave our *Friend* Occasion to tell them, *If they would prove themselves Ministers of Christ, he would be Catechised by them*; but not one of the *Challengers* would undertake that, as before is hinted. Yet one Queried of us, *Whether we own'd the Resurrection?* to which Answer was given, *We did own it, according to the Holy Scriptures.*

And then We were ask'd, *Whether Christ was Born of a Virgin, and whether that Christ that was born of the Virgin* Mary, *was now Glorified?*

To which we Replied, *That he was, and is Glorified, according to his own Prayer*, John 17.

Then the *Priests* Accused *G. W.* and Charged him, with Preferring our own Writings to the Holy Scriptures.

But we denied that *G. W.* hath so done, or that we Prefer our Writings to the Holy Scriptures.

Then they Suggested, That our *Teachers* have Asserted some *Blasphemies* against the *Priestly Office of Christ*; which we utterly Deny, as a Gross Slander cast upon our *Teachers.*

For howsoever we may be Accused and Misrepresented by *these Men*, that seem to be in *a Confederacy* against us, and say Page 1. *We could make nothing appear under their Hands, that they were the Challengers*; we hope, we have now done that to the Satisfaction of the Impartial, beyond

only

only urging some Stories we had heard as a Provocation, as they say, Page 1.

And as to the Liberty, Page 4. that they allow us, to Charge any of the *Church of England*-Writers with *Blasphemy*, and without giving them Book, Line or Page before hand, and their saying, *We will either Disown or Justifie it.*

We Reply, that when we Answer their *Proposal* therein, we shall be more *Just* to them, than they have been to us; for we shall give them *Authors Names*, *Book* and *Page*.

Something Briefly, but truly laid down, by Way of Reply, to Hen. Meriton, John Meriton *and* Lau. Park, *their Charging the* Quakers *in* Norfolk, *with Challenging them, &c. Proving by* Certificates *that the first* Challenge *lay not on the* Quakers *Part, but on the Persons above-named, in Conjunction with* F. Bugg.

FRancis *Bugg*, their Mercenary Agent, Printed a *Challenge* upon the *Quakers*, bearing Date, the 30*th* of *August*, 1698. in which he says, 'Friends, you cannot but remember your Ancient Practice, in going into the Churches 'disturbing the Established Ministers, your Challenging 'them into the Field, to Dispute with you: But behold 'here is a Change with you. We may now Challenge 'you, and Charge you again and again; Fearfulness doth 'Surprize you, that you dare not appear; but remember 'it is a sign, you cannot defend your Errors, and that your 'Innocency is not Triumphant, as *G. Whitehead* boasts: 'Let this *Charge* and *Challenge* therefore be a Touch-Stone 'to try your Sincerity, and let it be a Monument of your 'Cowardise and Insincerity for ever. Now

Now whether the Three Perſons above named, who did ſo publickly Eſpouſe *F. B*'s *Charge* and *Challenge*, be not Included in the [*We*] Expreſs'd in the above Recited *Challenge*: Let their following Actions demonſtrate.

For upon the 28th Day of the Month called *Auguſt* laſt, *L. Park* wrote a Letter to *S. Cater*, a Miniſter among the *Quakers*, with the ſaid *Printed Challenge* incloſed; acquainting him, the ſaid *S. Cater*, 'That he, the ſaid *L. Park*, and '*F. Bugg*, and Four more (Six in all) would make good 'the Charge therein contained, and that they had agreed 'upon Time and Place, *viz.* The *Third* of *October* next '(ſays he) if you will meet us with the ſame Number, 'at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, of that Day, in '*Dereham Church*; or if that place Offend you, at any 'other place within the ſaid Pariſh of *Weſt-Dereham*; and 'you are deſired to reſolve us in 14 days time, that we 'may relie upon it.

And further, to ſhew the Induſtry and Officiouſneſs of the Three *Prieſts* before named, to Puſh on the ſaid *Challenge*, and to Urge our Acceptance thereof, to come forth on the *Third* of *October* next after: The following *Certificates* may fully Evince.

This is to Certifie, That on or about the 28th Day of the Month called *Auguſt*, 1698. *John Meriton* and *Lau. Park* came, with *F. Bugg*, accompanied with ſeveral of the Inhabitants of *Weſt-Dereham*, to the Houſe of *William Phillips* (*Tho. Becket*'s Wife being there) and did leave a *Printed Challenge* (with *F. Bugg*'s Name thereto) againſt the People call'd *Quakers*; and ſoon after, upon the ſame day, *Samuel Chicko*, one of the Inhabitants of *Weſt-Dereham* aforeſaid, brought a Paper in Writing to the ſaid *Thomas Becket*'s Wife, wherein was Propoſed a Meeting to be upon the *Third* of *October* next following, in *Weſt-Dereham Church*, and that there would be Six of

of them, and would allow us the like Number, to Debate the Matters contained in the ſaid Printed Challenge. *Witneſs our Hands.*

William Phillips,
Mary Becket.

This is to Certifie, That upon or about the 30*th* Day of the Month called *Auguſt*, 1698. *Hen. Meriton* and *John Meriton* came, with *F. Bugg*, to the Houſe of *John Hubbard*, in *Stoak*, in *Norfolk*, and there did urge again the ſaid Matter, of a Publick Meeting, in the Preſence of

John Hubbard,
Daniel Phillips,
Edward Plumſtid.

And the ſame day, the *Prieſts*, *Hen. Meriton* and *John Meriton*, with *F. Bugg*, went to the *Crown Inn*, in the ſaid Town of *Stoak*; and one or more of them, would have had the *Inn-keeper* Poſt up the ſaid Printed *Challenge* upon the *Sign-Poſt* or any other Place, which the ſaid *Inn-keeper* refuſed to do: This he affirmed in our preſence,

John Gurney,
Joſeph Hadduk,
Gilbert Lowe.

By all which it manifeſtly appears, that they were the *Aggreſſors, and firſt Challengers* and *not We*: For, *firſt*, here is a Printed *Challenge*, and altho' it has only *F. Bugg*'s name to it, yet it's in the Plural Number [*We*] and in the moſt daring and inſulting Terms, as could well be expreſt: Now this [*We*] could not mean *F. Bugg* alone, but ſome *Others in Conjunction* with him; and who is it moſt rational to ſuppoſe thoſe to be? But the aforeſaid *Prieſts* that accompanied him; as the fore going *Certificates* ſet forth?

Secondly, *L. Park*'s Letter to *S. Cater* (afore recited) telling him; that he, and *F. Bugg*, with Four more

(Six

(Six in all) would meet a like Number of the *Quakers*; to make good the *Charge* contained in the Printed *Challenge*, acquainting him with *Time* and *Place*, and requiring a Positive Answer in Fourteen Days.

Thirdly, *F. Bugg*, *L. Park* and *J. Meriton*, urging the same at *West-Dereham*; and *F. Bugg*'s Writing a Paper to Good-Wife *Becket* (as he calls her) saying, *If the Teachers amongst the* Quakers *would not come forth; then they that were well-meaning amongst them, might see it and leave them*, &c.

Fourthly, *H. Meriton* and *J. Meriton*, going to *Stoak*, with *F. Bugg*; and there again Urging the aforesaid *Challenge*.

Fifthly, Their Going together to an *Inn* in *Stoak*, and pressing the *Inn-keeper*, to post the Printed *Challenge* against us. All which Passages were before, we wrote, our first Letter to them, dated the *7th* of the *7th* Month, 1698.

Wherefore let all Sober and Moderare Persons Judge, who were the first *Challengers*; and whether we could do any less, than Appear and Defend *Our selves*, from their false *Charges* (considering how they dared us to *come forth*, &c.) and Charged us with *Fearfulness* and *Surprise*; if we did not, and said, *Let it be a Monument of your Cowardise and Insincerity for ever.*

Copies of several *Letters* that passed between the *Priests*, and some of the People called *Quakers*.

The Priests, *with their Assistant* Francis Bugg, *having first Challenged* Us, *as is manifest by the foregoing* Certificates, *we could not but think our selves obliged to Appear in the* Defence *of God's most Holy and Blessed* Truth; *and thereupon sent them the following Letter,* The 7th of the 7th Month, 98. *which they falsly stile* The Quakers Challenge.

IT is Prudence in Wise Men, to Hear and Weigh a *Defence*, as well as a *Charge*. *Francis Bugg* has *Charged* the People called *Quakers* in *Print*, and has been Answered, to those several *Charges*, several Times. Some of the Answers wrote in the *Defence* of the said People, are Entituled, *A Charitable Essay*, *A Just Enquiry*, *Innocency Triumphant*, and *The Counterfeit Convert a Scandal to Christianity*: Which are those, which at present occur to our Memory. And when you have read over these *Answers*, if you will give it under your Hands, that those *Answers* are *Defective*: Or, if you think you have *Matter* to *Charge us* withal, let *us* have *your* Charge under *your* own Hands, and appoint *Time* and *Place* Convenient, and *we* or some, others of *us* (God willing) will meet *you*, as Publickly as *you* Please. But *we* reject *Francis Bugg*'s Charge, as being already Sufficiently Answered, several Times over, as also him to be one of the Persons concerned against us in *Disputation*, because of his Unreasonableness.

We cannot suppose *you* so void of Common Sense, as to look upon it suitable to a Right Management of *Controversie*, to Answer an Opposer several times over in One and the Same Thing or Things.

And be it known to you all, this is not through any *Conſciouſneſs* to our ſelves, of holding any *Errors*; but if *you* think it is, *you* may if you Pleaſe, try the utmoſt of *your Skill* and *Strength*, and ſee what *you* can Get by it. But pray leave off Boaſting, until you have obtained *Victory*.

Remember the Anſwer that was given to *Ben-hadad*, 1 *Kings* 20. 11. You may make up a *Quaker* according to your own Dreſs, to Pleaſe *your* Fancies; but Counterfeits will not paſs with *us* for True Coin.

Therefore to Conclude at Preſent, as *we* ſaid before, *we* are Free, or ſome Others of *us*, to Meet with *you*, or any of *you* all, *Francis Bugg* only Excepted, for the *Reaſons* aforeſaid, to take *your Charge*, and ſtand a Publick Tryal, deſiring only the *Common Priviledges to ſuch Occaſions belonging*, Provided, as aforeſaid, *you* think Meet, in *your* own Names, or any other of *your* Cloth, to *Charge us*.

And through the Lord's Aſſiſtance *you* ſhall hear from *us*, or ſome others of *us*, whom *you*, or ſome of *you*, have endeavoured to Traduce, and we Doubt not Publickly to put aſide that Diſguiſe that by others have been put upon *us*, and to make it appear to all unbiaſſed Perſons, that *we* really are, in the *Truth*, and *Simplicity* of the *Goſpel*, of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Your Real Friends,

Richard Aſhby, *Stephen Stanton*, *Tho. Buckingham*,
John Hubbard, *Daniel Phillips*, *Richard Caſe*,
Philip Taſſell, *Matth. Harriſon*, *John Brown*.
Rich. Murter, *John Hunter*,

The

The Priests *Answer to the foregoing Letter.*

Friends,

IT has not been from any Distrust of the Goodness of our *Cause*, or any backwardness in *us* to Defend *It*, that *we* have been thus long in returning an *Answer* to the Challenge *you* sent *us*, but partly from not being able to resolve immediately, at that Distance *we* Live, from those *we* had to Consult, how far it was fit to Comply with some of *your* Terms, that appeared unreasonable to *us*, and partly from the difficulty of getting *your Books*, which *you* might with greater Justice expect in this Case *we* should Read, if they were permitted to go more freely, than yet *we* can find, into other Hands, as well as those of *your Friends*. But having, with a great deal of Trouble, in some Measure got over this Stop, *we* shall not insist upon *Francis Bugg*'s bearing any Part in the Intended *Dispute*, nor Wave the Challenge *you* have turned upon *us*, instead of accepting of *his*, which yet *we* think *you* ought to have done, Notwithstanding what *you* Precariously affirm in *your* own Cause, of *his* being Unreasonable, and Answered already.

But *your* excluding *him*, shall not hinder *us*, or some of our Brethren, from giving *you* a Meeting in Answer to *your Challenge*.

And that *we* may prevent *Tumults* and *Confusions*, and that *our* Meeting may obtain the Design *we* all Hope for, God's *Glory*, and the Hearers *Edification*, *we* think fit to acquaint *you* with these our following Propositions:

I. *That the Place to Meet in be* West-Dereham *Church, being pretty Capacious and well Gallery'd.*

II. *That the time of* our *Meeting be on* Thurſday *the* 8th *of* December, *at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, and ſo on, as many* Thurſdays *following, as there ſhall be occaſion for.*

III. *That but Six of a ſide be permitted to Diſpute, and thoſe Six to be known Inhabitants, within the Counties of* Norfolk, *and* Suffolk, *or the City of* Norwich, *and that there be but one of thoſe Six to ſpeak at a time, and that he be not interrupted, unleſs he runs out beyond the* Term of Five Minutes at a time.

IV. *That no Perſonal Reflections ſhall be made one againſt another, that are Forreign to the Cauſe.*

V. *That a Notary of each ſide be appointed, to write down the* Objections *and* Anſwers *that are made by either* Party, *and that they be compared at the end of every Meeting, if there ſhall happen to be more than one.*

The Matters *we* Charge *you* with are as follow.

I. We *Charge* you *with* Blaſphemy *againſt* God.

II. *With* Blaſphemy *againſt* Jeſus Chriſt.

III. *With* Blaſphemy *againſt the* Holy Scriptures.

IV. We *Charge* you *with great Contempt of* Civil Magigracy, *and the* Ordinances *which* Jeſus Chriſt *Inſtituted, viz.* Baptiſm *by* Water, *and the* Lord's Supper, *with* Bread *and* Wine.

V. We *Charge* you, *that the* Light within *as taught by* you, *leaves* you *without any certain Rule, and Expoſes* you *to the forementioned, and many other* Blaſphemies.

Hen. Meriton, John Meriton, Lau. Parke.

The

A Reply to the Prieſts *Letter.* The 31ſt. of the 8th Month, 1698.

Friends,

YOUR Paper, with the Charge upon the People call'd *Quakers*, without a Date, came to the Hands of our Friend *John Hubbard* on the 27th Inſtant. *You* were pleaſed to call the Offer *we* made to *you* in Writing a *Challenge*, which Term *we* think is no ways Applicable to it. For taking Notice of *your* readineſs to Eſpouſe *Francis Bugg*'s Charge and Challenge, *we* look'd upon it very Reaſonable, and Prudence in *you*, as Wiſe Men, to hear *our Defence*; therefore referr'd *you* to ſeveral of *our* Printed Anſwers, which if *you* had deſired of *us* to have ſeen them, *we* would have procured them for *you*; but not one word of that from *you*, in ſo many Weeks time. And for *our* excluding *F. B.* from any part of the intended Diſpute, *we* have ſo much Cauſe and Reaſon for it (*we* believe) as will ſufficiently Juſtifie *us*, in the Opinion of all Judicious Perſons. And whereas *you* render it difficult, to procure *our* Friends Books, *we* are willing to Expoſe them to any that deſires them, as is well known, aud as *you* might have prov'd, if *you* had made Trial.

And now, before *we* take Notice of *your* Propoſitions, *we* judge it neceſſary to enquire into the Extent of *your* Charge, whether it be upon the whole Body of the People called *Quakers*, or upon particular Perſons, or upon the Writings of particular Perſons, Eſpecially *your* Three firſt Charges. If *you* Charge a whole Body of People, *you* are not Juſt in *your* Limitation, that the Perſons that have a ſhare in the Diſpute, be only known Inhabitants in *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, and City of *Norwich*, and at the ſame time Charge all the ſaid People Generally. If it be againſt particular Perſons,

we judge *you* ought to name Them in *your* Charge; if it be againſt the Writings of particular Perſons, it is neceſſary for *you* to name the *Authors*, and the *Titles of the Books*, and the *Pages*; this *we* Inſiſt upon. Theſe things Premiſed, *we* take Notice of *your* Propoſitions.

I. As to the place in *Weſt-Dereham*, *we* do not object againſt it, but are Indifferent as to that.

II. The Day perfixt being the Eighth of *December* next, will not be Convenient for ſome of *us*, being in *Stoak-fair* Week.

III. That Six Perſons only of a ſide be Permitted to Manage the Diſpute, and thoſe Six to be known Inhabitants in *Nolfolk*, *Saffolk*, and *Norwich*, *we* agree to, provided *your* Charge reaches not to any *Perſon*, or the *Writings* of any *Perſon*, that lives not in either of the ſaid Counties, or ſaid City; but if it doth, *we* expect (and account it very Reaſonable) to be left to *our* free Liberty in the Choice of *our* Six, and allow the ſame Liberty to *you*. And that but One be allowed to ſpeak at a time, is very neceſſary, and we like it well; but not to be Limitted Preciſely to the ſpace of Five Minutes; yet to endeavour Brevity, and before Anſwer be made, that there be a little Pauſe.

IV. V. Your Fourth and Fifth Propoſitions *we* like, as ſtated by *you*; and do expect an Explanation of the Extent of *your* Charge, as is aboveſaid, to be ſent *us* without delay; waving to Repeat or Object againſt it, or any Article thereof, but refer that until *we* hear further from *you*. *We* are your Friends,

Richard Aſhby. *John Hubbard.* *Dan. Phillips.*
Richard Caſe. *John Brown.* *Philip Taſſill.*

The

The Priests *Answer to the Foregoing Letter, Dated* November *the* 3*d.* 1698.

Friends,

WE Observe in *your* last, Dated *October* the 31st 1698. how apt you are to Catch at every little Escape, tho' nothing relating to the Cause, the omission of a Date. *We* hope, tho' *we* forgot the 27th of *October*, *we* shall not forget the 8th of *December*. *You* are offended *we* call *your* first Letter a *Challenge* to *us*, tho' *our* betters have thought it the Boldest and Pertest that ever was sent to the whole *Host of Israel*, *viz.* as *you* more than once in *your* Letter term it to *us*, or any of *us* all, and to any of *our* Cloth, and that from the Hands of such whom *we* never took to be any great *Goliahs*. But all this Anger it seems is, because *we* so Zealously (as you think) Espouse *Francis Bugg*'s Charge. One may see how ready *you* are to take Fire, when so small a Spark will kindle *you*; For one of *us* was not there when he delivered his Charge; Another of *us* came by meer accident; and None of *us* were any other than as Witnesses to the Delivery of it; which any Three of *your* honest Neigbours, *we* suppose, might have been without Offence. As to the Books *you* mention'd to *us* to be Read, which *you* conceive would have cooled *our* Zeal for *Bugg*, and his so often (as *you* say) bafft'd Charge. *You* may please to know, that *we* have Read them, and that *Bugg* is not Answer'd, nor can be Answer'd any other way (seeing the Charge is drawn from Quotations out of *your own Books*) but by denying the Truth of Them, which *your* pretended Answerers do not do; but betake themselves to their usual Palliating and Painting Tricks, to cover over and hide their Deformities.

We confeſs, *we* had a better Opinion of *your* Principles before *we* ſaw *your Books*, than now *we* have; for indeed *we* have received more Satisfaction from *your* Anſwers, than from the Books they pretend to Anſwer; being confirm'd more in *our* Belief, that they are Unanſwerable. And if *you* write in this manner, *we* ſhall never deſire to take the Pen out of *your* Hands, for it will do *us* no Hurt; but for your Gall that is in the Ink. Yet becauſe *you* ſay, he muſt be Rejected, and *you* will have it ſo; *we* have given *you your* Humour, and have accepted of *your* Challenge without him.

Friends, *Your* People have been ever ready to ſay, *Our* Charges have been Lies & Forgeries, and every where have run with this Cry in their Mouths; Lies, all Lies, becauſe alas! they never Read *our Books*, or at leaſt never Compar'd them with *your* Authors: Therefore *we* perceive that Writing Books will not do; but *we* muſt bring forth thoſe that *you* have Written, at a Publick Meeting, and lay them open before *your* Deluded Followers, and deſire them to ſee with their own Eyes, and perhaps they may ſee ſuch a Frightful Sight, as they little expected there.

You might eaſily have diſcerned, that *our* Charge affects the whole Body of *your* People; it relating to Blaſphemies ſo long and ſo often Printed, and yet never Contradicted or Cenſured, but Aſſerted to be from Perſons Infallible. *Blaſphemies* ſo often approved of by *your* Second Days Meetings, where all *your Books* are Examined, and by an *Index Expurgatorius* Corrected, tho' written from the Mouth of the Lord. So that *your Church* hath owned them, and *we* may juſtly Charge the *Blaſphemy* of thoſe Books upon *it*, till they Diſown them.

But *you* ſeem to be much Concerned for the Reſtraint *we* lay upon *you*, ſo that *you* may not go out of this Dioceſs for *your* aſſiſtance. But truly Sirs, *you* ſee, *we* have put the

ſame

ſame Reſtraint upon *our* ſelves, *we* will not go out of the Dioceſs, perhaps, but a little way from Home for *ours*; *we* cannot think *you* can be at a want for help in ſuch a Dioceſs, where there are ſeveral Thouſands of *you*.

Beſides, if *you* will have a little Patience, the Perſons *you* had probably deſigned for this Service may have work enough at Home ere long: For *we* are Inclinable to believe, that the like Charge to this, will go through many Dioceſſes in this Kingdom: So that they may ſave *their* Powder and Shot till the Charge comes to *their* Door.

Friends, tho' *we* intend to Charge *you* with Blaſphemy out of *your own Books*; yet *we* cannot think it fit to give *you* the Authors Names, Line, and Page; for that were to ſend you *our* Arguments before the Day we ſhall uſe them, that you may have time the more cunningly to Elude the Force of them. It is enough to let you ſee, we intend to Charge you with Blaſphemy, as expreſſed in our laſt; tho' we ſhould not be ſo Fooliſhly Generous, as to tell you the very Place where we intend to Aſſault you. Beſides we our ſelves have not yet read over ſome of your Books, out of which, as we are Reading them, there ariſes every Day new Matter for a Charge; and ſo perhaps there may to the time of our Meeting: For we can ſcarce open a Book of yours, but preſently we are even Frighted with ſuch Apparition, that ſends us to our Prayers, for a Poor Deluded People, that are daily Haunted with them: And further we may add, that you have their Books as well as we, and would you read them over as we do, ye your ſelves could not but ſee thoſe *Blaſphemies* we Charge you with, being too big to eſcape your ſight.

But you think it is fit, the Authors of thoſe Books out of which we extract *your Charge*, ſhould be permitted to ſpeak for themſelves. You cannot but know, that moſt of thoſe Authors are Dead; and as for them that are Alive, we

have already heard them in your *Prints* to little purpose: However, they have no Reason to Challenge it as a peculiar Due to them, to be the only Vindicators of their Cause, seeing every particular Member of your *Church* is concern'd in it, as well as they: So that it is a Charge upon every one of you all, as well as upon the Authors of those Books, you having Espoused them, till they be Disown'd, and Condemn'd by you.

To conclude, We cannot see how it can consist with either Justice or Prudence to alter our Method, for the Reasons given: We therefore think it but a vain thing for you to trouble your selves or us, with any more such Letters. Poor People! that are going Blindfold to *Samaria* instead of *Dothan*. The Lord open your Eyes, to see where you are, and whither you are a going, is the Prayer of your best of Friends, tho' you may possibly think us your greatest Enemies.

Hen. Meriton, John Meriton, Lau. Parke.

To *Henry Meriton*, *John Meriton*, and *Laurence Parke*, a Reply to the foregoing Letter, dated *November* 3. 1698.

Friends,

YOURS of the third Instant *we* received, wherein is the date of *your* former; in Answer to which, when, *we* in Friendly Sort told *you* of that Omission, it was not that *we* did Catch at any little escape of *yours*, which did at least relate to the *Letter*, if not the *Cause*. But to proceed;

proceed; As in *our* laſt *we* Judge the Term *Challenge* not proper to the Offer *we* made, whatever the Judgment of *your* Selves, or Betters, may be concerning it; As for its Boldneſs and Pertneſs (as *you* are pleaſed to Term it) *we* take it to be another Eſcape of *your* Memories, to ſuppoſe it herein to exceed any of thoſe (as *you* ſay) which were ſent to the whole *Hoſt of Iſrael*. But ſuch as it is *we* doubt not to make Good, and that in Truth void of Wrath. As to *Francis Bugg*, *you* did Eſpouſe his *Charge* Blindfold, as appears by *your* after Inquiry, and Reading of *our Books*, and did Eſpouſe it by more Ways than that of Witneſſing to the Delivery of *the Charge*, which none of *our* Honeſt unprejudicate Neighbours would.

As for *Quotations* made by *Bugg* from *our Books*, *you* ſay the petended Anſwerers deny the Truth of them, but betake themſelves to their Uſual *Palliating* and *Painting Tricks*. This Aſſertion *we* have no Cauſe to Credit, but for the preſent will ſay, that *we* know that in ſeveral Anſwers of *ours* to Books of this ſort, there is frequently Detected falſe Quotations, and his Apparent Forgeries, which if either *you* have not Read, or not Obſerved, it might have been well enough to forbear that Scurrility of *Painting*, and *Tricks*.

Now for *your Charge*, *you* Acknowledge it to be upon the whole Body of *us*, and therefore (as in *our* former) *we* think *you* are not juſt in *your* Limitation, nor does *your* Threat (if you will have a little Patience, *&c.*) fright us from ſtill Inſiſting on our Exceptions: For, as our laſt did declare our Acceptance of ſuch of your Propoſitions, as were Equal and Fair, and deſired the reſt might be agreeable, and ſuch as we are Perſwaded no Ingenuous or Juſt Perſons would Evade or Deny us: So we ſtill inſiſt on them, not knowing any Power or Dominion you have over us, to over rule what we have ſo fairly offered to qua-

lifie your *Limitations*. For if you intend to confine us as Reſpondents, only who are within this *Dioceſs*, it is Reaſonable to confine you not to *Charge* Perſons or their Books more Remote or Abſent: For why ſhould a Man whom you may *Charge*, be obliged to Anſwer by *Proxy*, when perhaps he can better Defend himſelf; the Juſtice of the Common Law in this Caſe much exceeds your pretence of *Edification*; and this being denied by you, we take it for granted, your Deſign is to Cenſure and paſs Judgment on Perſons Unheard. And if *your Charge* be to be drawn from *Books*, it is as reaſonable by the Common Voice of Mankind, that their *Titles* and *Pages* be given, the *Authors* of which if Living, have an undoubted Right to Explain for Themſelves; or if Dead, ſuch Notice is reaſonable for our due Preparation to Anſwer: Till which we ſhall only ſay, that the Living Labours of the Dead, have this Juſtice due to Them, *viz.* that the whole be conſidered, and the Scope and Intent of the Writer be taken, and not Rigidly, much leſs Falſly to pervert his Words, to a Senſe Contrary and Repugnant to the Scope of the whole: The refuſal hereof will ſpeak a Deſign Partial, Injurious and Precipitant; but we hoping (on better Conſideration) you'l do otherwiſe, do expect as above to be ſent us, in ſuch convenient Time, as we may Examine them, which cannot be in leſs time then Three Weeks at leaſt. This Demand, it's true you Laugh at, and call it a Fooliſh Generoſity; yet, it being Reaſonable, we inſiſt on it: For the Frightful Apparitions which by opening our *Books*, you ſay, ſent you to your Prayers, we doubt your *Frights* or *Feavers* have been ſo great, as to prevent your having any true Idea of *Them*, or any loving Concern for *Us* therein: And not finding our Selves Haunted, as you Suggeſt, we rather deſire you to ſpeak Truth, than offer falſe Sacrifice. For Concluſion

to

to this, and to Try your Ingenuity, whether your Method be to do as you would be done unto, we put these following Questions.

I. *Whether* you *are willing to be Charged out of all the Old and New Books, Pamphlets and Sermons that* your *Brethen the* Clergy *have Wrote and Printed, to stand and fall by them?*

II. *Are* you *willing* we *should Publickly Charge* you *with* Errors, *or* Mistakes *out of any of the abovementioned, and not beforehand give the Particular Instances to* you? *For know* ye, *that* we *expect Equal Liberty with* you, *to Charge as well as to be Charged.*

III. *Will* you *Personate all* your *Brethren, as above, both Dead and Living, so as to be Charged out of their Books in their stead?*

Your *direct Answer* we *expect without further Evasion, Boast or Menace, in the interim, conclude,*

Your abused (because not sufficiently known) Friends.

Richard Ashby, Daniel Phillips,
John Hubbard, Richard Case.

The Reply, dated *November* the 16*th* 1698.

Friends,

YOUR last does not a little astonish Us. 1*st*. That you should deny your *Challenge*, which is as plain an one, as Words in English can make it, and truly very brave, *to all our Cloth*, that is, to Nine or Ten Thousand of Us. 2*ly*. That you affirm, that we espoused *Bugg*'s Cause, which you, or some of you cannot but know the contrary

contrary by one of us: For, when the laſt Summer you demanded of *Hen. Meriton*, whether he would Juſtifie *Bugg*'s Books Written againſt you, he Anſwer'd, They contained Matter of Fact, which he was not capable of judging of, having not the Books to compare them with *Francis Bugg*'s Writings; yet told you, that if his Citations were true (you ſee then he made an If of it, and therefore did not juſtifie them) he would juſtifie ſuch Expreſſions were Blaſphemy.

But you are ſtill offended at our Unreaſonable Limitation of you, as to the Place whence you are to fetch your Diſputants. But *Friends*, did not you begin with us? Did not you limit us, when you rejected *Francis Bugg*? And all others too, that were not of our Cloth, ſome of whom you know too well might have been very uſeful to us in this Service. Nay, did not you reject *Francis Bugg* for this Reaſon, becauſe he had been Anſwered, as you pretend, over and over again, and was unreaſonable, as if we had nothing to do but *Actum agere*: And may not we ſay the ſame of your *Hackney Diſputants*, they have trudged ſo long in that Road, and have been Spur'd and Gall'd by us enough already, and therefore in reaſon we ought to turn them off a-while, and give them reſt till another occaſion; more plainly, they have been Anſwered over and over already, and are unreaſonable.

Beſides, *Your Church*, which you profeſs your ſelves to be ſo Zealous Members of, have owned, and approved of thoſe Books we intend to quote, and your ſelves have been known to admire, and almoſt adore them and their Authors: And therefore till you diſclaim them, you are as much concern'd to Vindicate them as the Authors themſelves; for by owning them you become joynt Authors, and your Plea for them will be the Plea of Parties, and not of Proxies.

But

But now, When your Court of Equity will not Relieve you, you Fly to Common Law; but if you give us no better Proof of your Skill in it, then in this Instance, we shall have little Reason to take your Counsel in Law Business.

Friends, 'Tis Matter of Fact we Charge you with, that we find such and such Blasphemous Expressions in your Books: For Matter of Right, whether such Expressions are to be esteemed Blasphemy, we shall leave it to the Judgment of the Auditors. The Matters of Fact your Authors have already owned them, at least so much as will make good our Charge: And for Matter of Right, whether such Expressions be Blasphemous or no, we think the Common Law will not allow the Accused Malefactor, when he's accused of the Fact aright, to Judge of the Law, or whether his Fact hath been a Breach of it. Suppose we had Charged some of your *Friends* with Common Swearing by their Maker, and they should not deny Matter of Fact, that they have said such words; only they excuse them with a great deal of Artifice, that they were spoke in Passion, that they dropt from them rashly, or their Minds did a little run out, or truly they do not affect such Speeches, or they may see Cause otherwise to word them; is there any Law or Equity, such Men should be admitted in any Court in the World to Plead and Apologize for Common Swearing? If Matter of Fact be prov'd or own'd, may not the Judge turn such Men out of the Court, and pass the Definitive upon them. The Fact is own'd by the Men themselves, that such Expressions are in their Books, so much at leastwise as will prove the Charge, and let the Auditory (whom we Appeal to as Judges in this Case) Determine, whether Blasphemy or no. We dare Affirm, it will be easier for the People to Judge, that such and such Words are *Blasphemy*, then that

such

such words are *Swearing*. And we are Sorry to see you are so Zealous for such *Authors*, only to give them an an opportunity to excuse *Blasphemy*. At last, you direct us to the *Golden* Rule in Divinity, *to do as we would be done by*; and think you have Gravell'd us with Three Questions, which you suppose we cannot Answer; if we stick to our former Measure, without apparent Violation of it.

Now Sirs, what are those hard Measures, I pray? Why truly, after we have Charged some of yours with *Blasphemy*, in some *Books*, Printed *Ten*, *Twenty*, *Thirty*, some *Forty* Years ago, that were never Corrected, nor Censured by your *Church*, in your Second Days Meeting, Erected on purpose to Examine *Books*, and Licence them; but have been Approved and Commended to us, and Admired by almost all of you: we Demand, that you would either Justifie, or Disown them Publickly under your Hands. And now you ask us very Pertinently, Whether we are willing to be Charged with all the Old and New Books and Pamphlets that our Brethren of the *Clergy* have Written or Printed, to stand or fall by them.

Such an Impertinency as this is, would be almost Intolerable, but that we are so commonly used to them by your Party: Do but Scratch your Heads a little, and consider seriously the Force of such a Consequence. We are bound to Justifie or Disown all the Books of our Brethren, as to every little Error or Mistake, because we call upon you only to Justifie or Dosown the *Blasphemies* of yours: We doubt not but there have been *some tolerable Errors* in ours, which are no great Blot to an Author that acknowledges himself to be a Man, *viz.* Fallible; but a Mighty Prejudice against the Infallible Club, whether at *Rome* or *Grace-Church-street*, that pretend they cannot Err: And we are only obliged to a Charitable Forbearance in such Cases, when you will be obliged for every Error you find

find in yours, by reaſon of ſuch a Pretence, to diſown them as Cheats.

But if any of our Authors have Wrote or Printed *Blaſphemy*, we are ſure ſuch have not been approved or allowed of by our General Meeting, our Convocation, who have made bold to Cenſure them without asking the Authors leave; or if there be any ſuch that have eſcaped the Knowledge of the Convocation, and therefore not Cenſured by them, perhaps they have been Condemned, if not Burnt by *Parliaments* and *Univerſities*; or if they have eſcaped ſuch a Cenſure, bring out ſuch *Books of ours* when you will, and you ſhall ſee, we will either Juſtifie or Diſown them, without calling for the Authors to come and plead their Cauſe.

To the Second Queſtion we Anſwer, You ſhall have equal Liberty with us, Produce our Books, and your Charge againſt them (Suppoſing it to be of *Blaſphemy*) when you will, after you have firſt Anſwered ours, and we will give you leave to reſerve your particular Inſtances to the very Time and Place of Meeting, if you pleaſe: For we are aſſured, that *Blaſphemy* is of ſo ſtrong and rank a Scent, that every *Chriſtian* that hath not his Noſe quite ſtop'd, that as St. *Paul* ſays, can but exerciſe his Senſes never ſo little about Good or Evil, as ſoon as ever it's open'd or diſcover'd, will preſently nauſeate and turn away from it. And we are ſorry that ſo many of you have got ſuch a Stuffing in your Heads, as not to perceive it; nay, you think them ſweet Odours ſure, that you will not be ſatisfied till you be allowed Advocates to Plead for them, as ſound and wholſome, and therefore to be continued in the beſt Room of the Houſe, the *Church*.

The Third Queſtion is Co-incident with the Firſt, but we muſt anſwer it, or you'll ſay we dropt it for its Weight; for there is no reaſon we ſhould appear in the Perſon of

all those our Brethren, so as to be Charged with every little Error out of their Books, in their stead; but this we will do, bring forth their *Books* and *Blasphemies*, as we have said before, and we will either Justifie them or Disown them, without consulting the Authors of them. And this is all that we desire of you, either to Justifie or Disown *Yours*, and *Their Blasphemies*, under your Hands, which we may expect from you, by the same Rule you lay before us, *Do as you would be done by.*

And why may we not expect this of you, seeing you have Abandoned your Authors in lesser matters, as in their Orders about *Ribbonds, Lace, Slit-wast-Coats, Prancing Steeds, Costly Habits, Fine Clothes, Stately Buildings, in forbearing to Thee and Thou, and Sir your Betters*? Seeing many of you have opposed their Orders in *Paying Tithes, Womens Meetings, Swearing in Courts of Judicature, of carrying no Guns in their Ships, or using the Carnal Weapon.*

Last of all, We take notice, with much joy, to see you so much fall off from the former Rude and Rugged Behaviour of those Men, whose Cause you Espouse, towards the *Clergy*: It is not long since your Address to them was in that Tinkerly Language, *Greedy Dogs, Babylon's Merchants, Devil-driven dungy Gods, Witches, Bloodhounds, Sodomites, Gimcracks, Wheelbarrows, Tatterdemallions*, which you have now Exchanged for more familiar and kind Expressions, to call us *Friends*; tho' your former Carriage hath been as Divinely Authorized as your present *Blasphemies*: Your very Railings have been, as you have pretended, by *Inspiration.* We hope, since you have begun to draw from that Old Filthy Spirit that dwelt in your Ancestors, you will at last totally Abandon them, seeing you have Abandoned them in lesser Matters, and why not in their *Blasphemies? Friends*, pray trouble us no more with your Letters, for our *Measures* are fix'd, and you may Chuse whether you will

will meet us upon the Terms reſolved upon or no. No more from thoſe who are reſolved to continue your real Friends, whether you will or no.

Hen. Meriton, John Meriton, Lau. Parke.

The laſt Letter to the Prieſts, *dated the 23d of the 9th Month, 1698. To which they returned no Anſwer.*

Friends,

YOURS of the 16th Inſtant We have received; the Tenor of it declares Your purpoſe ſtill to Evade our Juſt Demand, as is ſet forth in our *Second* and *Third* Letters to you; we ſhall now give you a brief Reply, becauſe we perceive our Letters are troubleſome to you. *Firſt*, if you were as Real, as you pretend Friendſhip towards us, the Moderation of Friendſhip, queſtionleſs, would prevent your being Aſtoniſhed at our denial of the Term *Challenge* in our firſt Letter to you: For then it had been our place to have Charged you; ſo we ſhould have made our ſelves *Plaintiffs*, and you had been *Defendants*. We doubt not but upon more mature Thoughts, your Aſtoniſhment will vaniſh away. *2dly*. We ſtill Inſiſt upon our former Demands, as juſt and reaſonable; for how can you (or any Man whatſoever) think that we, or any others for us, can make Anſwers to Matters thus hiddenly Charged upon us, whilſt you refuſe us the Knowledge of them, as (you ſay) they ſtand in our Books? Pray be plain with us, and if there be ſuch *Rank Blaſphemy* (as you ſay) bring it forth, do not be ſhy, *Give us Author, Title, Book, and Page*; and if you pleaſe, tell us in the firſt place, what is

Blaſphemy? 2*dly.* Wherein do you Charge us with *Blaſphemy* againſt *God*, and againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, and againſt the *Holy Scriptures?* What are the Words of thoſe ſeveral *Blaſphemies?* Your direct anſwer to thoſe Particulars. 3*dly.* We think it not worth while to follow you through all the Parts of your Letter, it being a great part of it *Rattle* and *Noiſe*, beſides our preſent buſineſs. 4*thly.* You Evade our Inſtance of the *Common Law.* We diſtinguiſh between Matter of Fact, and a Right to Judge. You have Charged us with Matter of Fact: We Demand a Copy of your Charge, that we may prepare true Anſwer to make. (As a Point of Juſtice allowed by the Common-Law to *Malefactors*.) We deny your having any Juriſdiction over us, as Judges; and before we Submit, we will have full Proof of your Commiſſion. Temporal Judges you are not, and to be Spiritually Qualified, you muſt prove, before we acknowledge you as ſuch. 5*thly.* Seeing you reſolutely Refuſe our Juſt Demand, we do not look upon our ſelves obliged to Meet you under the Limitation of your Terms.

We ſtand to our former Offer, and by the Terms we have offered to Qualifie yours; and if you refuſe, it ſhews (for all your Pretence of Friendſhip) a contrary Deſign upon us; we cannot look upon your Reſolution to Friendſhip any thing elſe, but an empty Pretence, until (as a Proof that it is otherwiſe) you give us the Inſtances of your Charge in Form and Manner aforeſaid; which is not (as you ſay) to ſend us your Arguments before hand, but the Matter of Fact you Charge us with. This, as a Point of Juſtice from you, we ſeek; not your Mercy, make your Arguments as ſtrong as you will. But while you thus put us off, we look upon it no other than a Shift, and Evaſion on your Parts, and a Deſign to Over-rule us. We leave it with you as a Teſt upon your Reſolute

Friend-

Friendſhip. Give us our Juſt Demand of Author, Title, Book, and Page, with convenient time (as ſet forth in our laſt to you) to prepare to make Anſwer; which, if you ſtill deny, we look upon your Pretence of Friendſhip to be a meer Complement and Decoy, and a Deſign of much Evil to us Couch'd under't. Notwithſtanding we are your Friends, and deſire you would mind the *Witneſs of God in your Conſciences*, that admits of *no Deceit*; and will, if minded, lead you to *deal Plainly*: To which you muſt Stand or Fall one Day.

Richard Aſhby, *Dan. Phillips*,
John Hubbard, *Richard Caſe*, &c.

P. S.

SEeing you have rejected our Terms, as aforeſaid, and we have refuſed to be Impoſed upon by ſome of your Limitations, we therefore ſhall take our Liberty, either to Meet or not Meet you: And if we Meet you, to have others of our Friends preſent with us, who are not Inhabitants within this *Dioceſs*, if we ſee Cauſe, and if they have Freedom thereto.

An Answer to the Certificate *of the* Inhabitants *of* West-Dereham, *and other* Parishes *Adjacent*, &c.

WHereas, they say, That *West-Dereham* is an exceeding *Small Salary, for a Minister, which discouraged most Men from supplying the Cure*, &c.

Let it be Observ'd, that had the *Salary* been Greater, it is likely it had not wanted a supply to the Cure. So that a greater *Salary*, a greater *Inducement*; a little *Salary*, a little *Inducement*; and no *Salary*, no *Inducement* at all: According to the Old *Proverb*, *No Mony, no Cure:* Or, *No Penny, no Pater Noster*. But is this a Mark of a True *Minister*? Or is it not directly contrary to *Christ*'s *Words* and *Commands?* Matth. 10. 7, 8.

And that Whereas *Laurence Parke* came not to the Cure until *June*, 1691. as they say; 'tis Observable, there was but one Person and his Wife in that Town, that did go then to the Meetings of the People call'd *Quakers*.

But after the said *Laurence Parke* came to Preach there, he made it much of his Business, at several times, to Preach against the said *People*, and that in very *Harsh* Terms and Expressions; which caus'd a Dissatisfaction in several of his *Hearers*, who thought the said *People* deserved not to be so much preached against; and those his *Sermons* caused some of them, to desire to be fully satisfied concerning the said *People*, and those things which the said *Laurence Parke* so frequently did Preach against to his Auditory, in the said Parish of *West-Dereham*; and this caused them to go to some of their *Meetings*, where they were satisfied that the said *Laurence Parke* had given a false Report concerning them and their Principles; and had much mis-

miſ-repreſented them to the People; and ſome of them have ſince left going to hear him, being fully ſatisfied in themſelves for ſo doing: So that inſtead of keeping his Hearers from the *Quakers* (ſo call'd) his miſ-repreſenting and abuſing them in his *Sermons*, was one great cauſe why ſome left him.

And whereas they ſay, 'The Wife of one *Becket* a '*Quaker*, gave her ſelf the trouble of going three Miles 'to the Miniſters Houſe, on purpoſe to vex him with '*Quakerly Queſtions* in a Quibling Way, on *Aſcention* day 'Morning, 1695. To which take her Certificate,

This is to Certifie, that I *Mary Becket*, the Wife of *Thomas Becket*, was much diſatisfied in my Mind concerning ſome Religious Matters, which I heard *Laurence Parke* the *Prieſt* of *Weſt-Dereham* (where I dwell) preach in his *Sermons*, where he uſe to preach frequently, not only againſt the *Quakers*, but other *Diſſenters*, at ſeveral times, before I went among the ſaid People called *Quakers*; and for that reaſon I went to his Houſe in *Barton*, deſiring to be ſatisfied by him, touching thoſe Matters they now call *Quakerly Queſtions*, not deſigning to diſturb him, but to be inſtructed by him; he told me he could not then reſolve me, but would endeavour to ſatisfie me in ſome of his *Sermons* if I would come to *Church*, which I did; but inſtead of being ſatisfied, touching thoſe Matters, I grew more diſſatisfied in my Mind, until I heard ſome of the People called *Quakers*, and then it pleaſed the Lord, I came to be ſatisfied concerning thoſe Matters: And this was the true reaſon of my going to his Houſe, and not in the leaſt to Vex or Diſturb him. Witneſs my hand,

Mary Becket.

And

And whereas they further say, 'They remember the 'time, that *Becket*, the Husband himself, watched their 'Minister in a Lane, not far from the Church, lined on 'both sides with People, to Dispute him; when his Spi-'rits were exhausted with Preaching, and his Strength 'weakened, by performing the Duty of the Day. Here follows *Thomas Becket*'s Certificate.

This is to Certifie, that I *Thomas Becket* was accidentally alone in my own Hired Ground, which lies next the *Steeple-House-Yard*, in *West-Dereham*, when the Preist and the People were coming from their Worship; and I had no intent to speak a Word to *Laurence Parke*, the Priest, but before he came near me (I being by the Gate next the Road, where he came) he held up his Hand, and said to his Hearers, *Look yonder stands a Man, do not you think he looks as if he had seen God?* (or to that purpose) adding, *The Light is in him*; and then I replied, *If the Light be not within thee, thou art in a Miserable Condition*, or Words to that effect: When he came nearer, he asked me how I did; I asked him how he did, and wished him to leave *telling so many Lyes* of the People called *Quakers*, till he had heard the Truth of those Matters, he reply'd, *When there was a Meeting at my House he would come to it*, and gave me his Hand to it; but he never came, (although he had notice.) To the Truth hereof I Subscribe my Name,

Thomas Becket.

And whereas they further say, that 'One *Phillips* a *Qua-'ker* went to disturb their Minister at his own House, one '*Munday* in *May* last, to Challenge, and Provoke him to Di-'spute with the *Quakers*, at a Meeting at *Stoak*, that 'was to be held on the Morrow, as himself confessed af-'ter he came Home: And he and his Friends set abroad

'the

'the Report some days before, to call the Country toge-
'ther, and then gave it out, the Priest promised, but durst
'not come. Now here follows a Certificate of the said *Phillips*.

This is to Certifie, that I *William Phillips* of *West-Dereham*, being informed that *Laurence Parke* was much disturbed at a Meeting that was at our Town the beginning of the Month call'd *May* last, and that he said, *If he knew where there was another Meeting, he would come to it*; I thought fit to go to his House, and let him know there was to be a Meeting the next day at *Stoak*, he answered, *He could not, or should not come, for that he was not then provided*; but said, that *in a short time there would be Meetings enough, when they had got the Books* (meaning our Friends Books) and more Discourse we had together, and he would have me sit down in his House and Drink, and I did not think he was offended with me, for my friendly going to his House, for *We* parted as good Neighbours, and I thought then in good Will to each other. Witness my Hand,

William Phillips.

And whereas they further say, 'This *Phillips*, together 'with one *Mason* and *Becker*, by speaking Profanely of the 'Ordinances of Christ, and setting up a Conventicle con-'trary to Law, *&c.*

This is a General and Proofless Charge, and deny'd by them, and till Prov'd, needs no further Reply.

And whereas they further Certifie, that their Minister, '*Laurence Parke*, had many Provocations and Challenges: 'One above all the rest, *say they*, we cannot forget, which 'was given him in Writing, when he was in the Pulpit, 'by one *Lilly*, in sight of the whole Congregation. In Answer to which, take the following Certificates.

This is to Certifie, That about Five or Six Years ago, I *Phillip Taſſill*, together with *John Brown*, being at the Burial of a Relation, at *Weſt-Dereham*; at which time, ſome of the Pariſhioners being the hearers of *Laurence Park*, told us, that their Miniſter had Preached, That the *Quakers* had not Read in a *Bible* theſe Forty Years; and that they did not care if all the *Bibles* were Burn'd.

Now we hearing the Report of ſuch a very Sad, Wicked and moſt Uncharitable Abuſe, were concerned; knowing our Innocency, did therefore write a few Lines to him, that he would admit us to a *Friendly Conference*, that he might either Prove his *Charge*, or Clear *Us* before the People; or to that Effect, without Adviſing with any of our Friends. *Witneſs our Hands*

Phillip Taſſill, John Brown.

This is to Certifie, That Mr. *Park* having Preached much againſt the *Quakers*, and Diſcourſed, that he would Prove them to be *No Chriſtians*; the Report thereof came to ſome of the ſaid People, and one of them gave me a few Lines to give him, to deſire a *Friendly Conference* with him about thoſe Matters, which I accordingly gave to the ſaid Mr. *Park*; and though I gave him them in the *Church*, it was my own Doing, and not by Direction of any one to give him them in that Place: And I did not underſtand that more than One or Two of the ſaid People wrote thoſe Lines; or that I might not give him them as Inoffenſively in that Place, as in any other, being one of his Hearers. This is about Five or Six Years ago, as I remember. *Witneſs my Hand,*

John Lilly.

And

And whereas they further Certifie, 'That this, and no-
'thing but this, made them and their Miniſters willing
'to Permit Mr. *Bugg* to come amongſt them, to try if he
'could *Conjure down* that buſie Spirit which poſſeſſes
'the *Quakers*, and is ſo troubleſome to us.

Reply, Firſt, We may conclude, by the Nature and Groſſneſs of theſe words, that you, poor People, know not what you have ſign'd: For you have given a Notable Reflection upon *Fra. Bugg*; Is he indeed turn'd *Conjurer?* But if it be ſo, we know that Spirit the Sincere *Quakers* are led by, has always been too hard for ſuch *Conjurers*. But pray, wherefore are you ſo harſh in Reflections on your *Neighbours*, as though they were led by a *Diabolical Spirit?* This touches not them only, but Chriſt alſo, in whom they have Believed; and that *Spirit* that dwelt in thoſe that Perſecuted our Lord, dwells too much in you; they call'd the Maſter of the Houſe *Beelzebub*, and alſo a *Blaſphemer*; no Marvel then if his Followers be called ſo: We remember this Caution, *The Servant is not greater than his Lord*; we are ſorry for your ſakes, that you ſhould Offer that Injury to your own Souls, but do deſire you to Repent, *that God may ſhew you Mercy*; for you, together with your Miniſter, lie under that *Wo*, ſpoken of in *Iſaiah* 5. in calling *Good* Evil, and *Light* Darkneſs.

Further, whereas you confeſs, 'That you and your Mini-
'ſter accompanied *F. Bugg* to one *Quakers* Houſe, and ſent
'one of his Printed Charges in a Letter to *Samuel Cater*.

Anſw. This is a clear Confeſſion; here are Eighteen of you, and your Miniſter, have Eſpouſed *F. Bugg*'s Challenge, and ſent it not only to a *Quaker*'s Houſe, but to *S. Cater* of *Little Port*, in the *Iſle of Ely*, for him, and Five more of his Brethren, to come forth, and joyn with your *Miniſter* and *F. Bugg*, and *Four* more. So now you have done well

well to be Ingenuous, and Confess your Act; for now the *Challenge* lies at your Door: Here is a *Printed Challenge* you sent, Dated *August* 10. 1698. And here is your *Minister's Letter*, Dated *August* 28. 1698. And here is the 3*d* of *October*, *fixt for the Day of the Dispute; and if we do not Appear, we must be judged Insincere and Cowardly:* And all this on your Part, before the *Quakers* wrote their *Friendly Letter*, Dated *September* the 7th 1698.

ERRATA.

PAge 7. line 30. for *laghed* read *laughed*. l. 29. f. *ye there* r. *yet here*. p. 13. l. 13. f. Βλασφημιαν r. Βλασφημιαν p. 20. l. 27. f. *Office* r. *Office*. p. 48. l. 10. f. *Preis* r. *Priest*.

FINIS.

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